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UNCLAS SAN JOSE 002435

SIPDIS

DEPT FOP DS/IP/WHA AND DS/IP/FPO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#)

SUBJECT: ARMED ROBBERY AND SHOOTING AT SHOPPING CENTER NEAR EMBASSY

REF: WILKINS/CARTER TELCON 10/17/2005

1. On 17 October at approximately 1300 hours, a hardware store employee waiting in a bank line to make a deposit of currency was shot in the leg while robbed of an undisclosed amount of cash. The location of the robbery is significant as it occurred at the Central Comercial Pavas Banco Nacional, which is immediately across the street from the Embassy. This shopping center is frequented by Mission Employees during working hours and Charge was getting a haircut in the shopping center at the time of the robbery/shooting. The Costa Rican police subsequently arrested three people involved in this robbery and the money stolen was recovered by the police. Other than the man shot in the robbery, three other shots were fired at a vehicle occupied by two citizens who tried to assist and apprehend the criminals as they tried to escape the crime scene. Fortunately these good citizens in the vehicle were not injured.

2. This is the first serious criminal incident of this type in the area immediately surrounding the Embassy in recent memory. The timing of this incident was also interesting. During the time of the robbery, RSO was engaged in conversation with FPO (ref a), and was advised that new Department budget cuts would possibly cause RSO to cut one mobile patrol and one perimeter security guard position (RSO only has two perimeter guard posts). It is just these guard positions that could have intervened in the armed robbery yesterday if the shooter had chosen to target Mission employees or visa applicants departing or entering the Embassy.

3. RSO will continue to report these incidents in order to support RSO's strong objection to any possible local guard cuts for this Post.
FRISBIE